



Façade Improvement Program (FIP)

Two Notch Road Corridor

Step-by-Step Guidelines

How it Works:

The Façade Improvement Program requires a percentage of matching funds from participants.

Eligible Improvements

Awnings
Carpentry
Fencing
Iron Bar Removal/Disposal
Tree Planting
Lighting
Masonry
Painting
Roofing
Security Monitoring System Install
Signs
Windows/Doors

The City will split the project cost with applicant, 80/20 – the City will pay 80% **and the applicant pays only 20%.**

Examples for Single Storefront

Total Project Cost = 9,500
80%=\$7,600 City
20%=\$1,900 Applicant **Total Project Cost = \$18,750**
80%=\$15,000 City
20%=\$ 3,750 Applicant **Total Project Cost = \$32,500**
80%=\$15,000 City (Maximum)
20%=\$17,500 Applicant

Loans forgiven over 3 years.
Grants forgiven over 1 year.

Loan Funding Limits:

Occupied Property:	Maximum from City
Single Storefront	\$15,000
Multi-Entrance (3+)	\$20,000

Underutilized Property*:

Single Storefront	\$15,000
Better-Building Bonus	\$10,000
Total	<u>\$25,000</u>

Multi-Entrance (3+)	\$20,000
Better-Building Bonus	\$10,000
Total	<u>\$30,000</u>

***Underutilized Property:** Vacant; No tenant in last 24+ months; Requires improvements to attract tenant/owner

Grant Funding Limit: Maximum from City
Any Eligible Property: \$1,999.99

All projects, loan or grant, require a minimum of 3 (three) bids from licensed commercial contractors.

1 Get Your Application Package and Program Information

- A. Available online at: www.columbiasc.net/obo/commercial-loans-grants/facade-improvement , or contact Program Coordinator (PC) to receive Application Documents. PC: 803.545-3381, glhall@columbiasc.net, 1225 Lady Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

2 Determine Improvements & Complete Project Planning Form

- A. Utilizing the Project Planning Form, candidates will determine and refine the improvements they want to make to their building. (*Project Planning Form included in Application Documents*)

3 **Mandatory** Pre-Application Meeting with PC & Planning Staff

- A. When Project Planning Form is completed; contact the PC to schedule your Pre-Application Meeting. During the Pre-Application Meeting, this form will be reviewed by the PC and City Planning Staff, to ensure materials and design(s) of your project meet City Code.

NOTE: Applicants are not eligible to submit an application without attending this mandatory meeting.

4 Prepare & Send Your Invitation to Bid

- A. As directed by PC and/or City Planning Staff, candidate will prepare the Job Specifications -- Scope of Work (SOW) from the information on their Project Planning Form. This SOW will help in preparing your Invitation to Bid that you will send out to commercial contractors for pricing.
- B. In addition to the SOW, your Invitation to Bid should include the deadline for bids to be submitted, usually 2 weeks from date of Invitation to Bid. Include the Wage Determination Sheet for Contractor.

NOTE: In order to receive at least three (3) bids, you may have to invite 5-6 contractors to bid.

5 Other Required Application Documents (See Application Checklist)

- A. Provide **Proof of Good Standing** for the following:
Property Taxes: Copy of most recent Paid Tax Receipt
Sewer & Water Fees: Copy of most recent bill showing "zero" (\$0.00) Past Due
Mortgage or Lease: If paying mortgage or lease, provide copy of most recent statement showing "zero" (\$0.00) Past Due;
- B. Copy of existing **Property and Liability Insurance** (must show property address – Declaration Statement)
- C. Copy of **Business License**, when applicable.

6 Capturing Job Creation/Retention Information

- A. Applicant will provide information on job creation and/or retention as requested by the City.

7 Receiving Your Bids from Contractors

- A. **A minimum of three (3) bids must be submitted with your application.** Of the 3 bids submitted, the Applicant will clearly mark the contractor's bid they are **selecting** to perform the work.
- B. The City encourages applicants to extend opportunities to bid to minority, women and/or veteran-owned businesses. *(A reference list of these business types is available upon request.)*

8 Assemble Application Package & Deliver (use the Application Checklist included in your package)

- A. Submit Application Package to Project Coordinator by mail or hand-deliver to 1225 Lady Street, Columbia, SC 29201. Your Application Package will be Time/Date Stamped to record receiving. Applications can also be submitted online; **however, an original, hard copy must still be submitted.**

9 Application Package Review and Approval/Denial Process

- A. Project Coordinator will review your package for completeness. You will be contacted for any missing or incorrect documents and your application placed on HOLD until all appropriate documentation has been submitted.
- B. Applicants will receive an email indicating that their application is complete.
- C. **Complete** Applications will be reviewed within thirty (30) days of receipt.
- D. The Façade Committee (FC) evaluates Application Packages the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.
- E. Application Packages will be processed on a first come, first served basis. *(Criteria by which Applications are evaluated are available by request.)*
- F. Applicants will be **notified of Approval/Denial within ten (10) business days**, of FC meeting.
- G. When applicable, the City's Planning Division will issue the Certificate of Design Approval (CDA) upon approval of the Façade application.

10 Contractor Permitting & Forgivable Loan Closing/Grant & Project Agreements

- A. The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that the Contractor obtains applicable permits, temporary encroachments, etc., which are standard requirements for all construction projects within city limits.
- B. Permits will be obtained within 30 days of the Applicant receiving Official Notification Award.
- C. The Applicant is responsible for providing Permit confirmation and contacting Façade Staff when this step is complete.

NOTE: Only when all required permits and plans approval are completed, will the Closing be held.

11 Loan Closing, Agreement Signing, Notice to Proceed; Start of Construction

- A. The Forgivable Loan/Grant Closing will be **conducted within thirty (30) days of project permitting** and at the convenience of the Applicant and selected Contractor(s).
- B. At the conclusion of the Forgivable Loan/Grant Closing, the "Notice to Proceed" will be issued.
- C. **No project construction shall begin without issuing the Notice to Proceed.**
- D. It shall be the responsibility of the Applicant to pay for any work, which is started/completed prior to receiving a "Notice to Proceed".
- E. **The Applicant (Program Manager) is responsible for contacting Facade Staff to advise the first day work begins onsite.**
- The City must periodically conduct interviews with the construction workers on the job site. The purpose of the interview is to capture observations of the work being performed, get the workers' views on the hours they work, type work they perform, and the wages they receive. This interview is a federal requirement.
 - The City reserves the right to inspect your project at any time.

12 Default

- A. If the Applicant **closes, sells or has a significant change in ownership for any reason**, to include foreclosure and/or any other legal action, prior to the established Maturity Date of the forgivable loan, or if the improvements are not properly maintained for a period of three (3) years, the forgivable loan will be considered in default.
- B. Improvements installed using the **Grant** have a maintenance period of one (1) years, or be considered in default.
- C. Upon Default, the City of Columbia has the right to request immediate repayment of the pro-rated, forgivable loan/grant balance. **(Properly Maintained** – receives no Code Violation(s), or façade damage is repaired within 30 days)

13 Vendor Payment Process

The City does not advance funds for any portion of this program. If Advanced Funds are required by the Contractor, these funds shall be paid by the Applicant.

- The Contractor will submit their completed Certificate of Payment Request and Invoice **to the Applicant.**
- The Applicant will review the Pay Request and Invoice to ensure only completed work is being invoiced and approved for payment.
- The Applicant will place their initials next to the Payment Due Amount on Payment Request and Total Due on Invoice. Submit the initialed Payment Request and Invoice to Façade Staff.
- All issues with Pay Applications will be resolved by the Applicant and the Contractor prior to submitting to the City. (*Façade Staff is available to assist with issue resolution, as needed.*)
- Only upon review, approval and email notification from Façade Staff, may the Applicant release payment to the Contractor.
- The Applicant will pay the first 20% of the Project Cost.
- After reaching the 20% threshold, the City will begin issuing payment of invoices to the Applicant for release to the Contractor.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to pay Contractor within seven (7) business days of receiving payment from the City.
- Any cost beyond 80% (program maximum available from City) shall be the responsibility of the Applicant.
- The **FINAL Pay Request shall include a copy of the City Building Inspector's Card**, when applicable, indicating Satisfied, Approved or similar, to show that work meets City Code.
- From the date the Payment Request is **signed and dated by FIP City Staff**, a check may be expected within **21 business days, or less.**

Contractor Note: Payment Request must be completed according to federal regulations and all related payroll documentation must be accurate and signed before Payment Request will be processed for payment.

Special Notes:

- ❖ Federal Regulations for façade programming prohibit funding for interior improvements.
- ❖ This program is federally funded; therefore, all projects must comply with applicable Federal Laws.